

Academics, Leadership and Service

The path set before me has been one of professional and academic opportunity. From an early age, I realized I had something that many people did not; it was drive, it was motivation, it was a passion for technology—a field that I would come to deeply love. This *passion* carried me far in the professional world. Over some twenty-one plus years, I have been given the honor and the privilege of helping those around me, through designing and creating technical solutions. Of course, providing solutions to the world has always been dear to my heart, but my first love is, and always has been, education. I was not blessed with a prestigious family name, or even a family lineage. I actually grew up as a ward of the state for three years, then was later adopted by a pastor family. Much of my early life was spent on a farm in the Florida Panhandle, in the small town of Westville, with a population of 281 people. I basically had nothing, and was from nowhere. But, that did not discourage me. In fact, it drove me to excel. I was compelled to achieve. Thus, when I entered the workforce, I was a locomotive. This specific characteristic, the ability to drive education and career, is what I would like to impart to others. I want excellence to be my legacy, and I also want to encourage others, both students and professionals, to push themselves. When asked, “How do I plan to use a post-baccalaureate degree to impact the world?” I would say, my goal is to split my time between the workforce and teaching. I would like to instruct students at the undergraduate and graduate levels of colleges and universities. I have a plethora of knowledge and experience, which I want to pass on to the next generation. But that is not all. It will always be my objective to address the unique needs of each and every student that I come into contact with. I love education, and support academia, fully. I have seen poor instruction; I have seen great instruction. Hence, I know exactly what amazing education looks like, and that is where I want to live. So, if I am saying anything at all, it is I have been a leader in the IT industry, and I am driven towards excellence. I would consider it an honor and privilege to be given the opportunity to become a doctoral candidate. Using a scholarship award, it would allow me to pursue higher education. Then, upon graduating, I would seek to become a professor. This would allow me to reach my own academic goals, as well as to further the advancement of technology by educating the students and professionals of tomorrow. I will also continue my research, and submit unique work to peer-reviewed journals. Ultimately, I want to further the fields of computing and information technology through academic discipline.

Thank you for considering me for the Graduate Scholar Award.

Respectfully,

Eddie S. Jackson